

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0877

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CHIEF OF STAFF AIR FORCE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 18739

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, TH

SUBJ: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH DEFENSE MINISTER: THAI-AM UDORN

REF: BANGKOK 18737 (DTG051132Z SEP 75)

1. MAIN TOPIC OF CONVERSATION DURING AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON DEFENSE MINISTER PRAMAN ADIREKSAN SEPTEMBER 3 (REFTEL) WAS FUTURE DISPOSITION OF THAI-AM AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR FACILITY AT UDORN ROYAL THAI AIR FORCE BASE.

2. AMBASSADOR OPENED BY RECOUNTING HISTORY OF ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF THAI-AM UDORN (THEN AIR AMERICA), CIRCUMSTANCES OF ITS CHANGE OF NAME, AND IMPACT UPON IT OF FALL OF CAMBODIA AND DEVELOPMENTS IN LAOS. HE SAID THAT SINCE U.S. HAD NO FURTHER WORK TO PUT INTO FACILITY, AND SINCE THAI-AM COMPANY ITSELF HAD DECIDED AGAINST TAKING IT OVER, U.S. HAD BEGUN SEVERAL MONTHS AGO TO CLOSE IT DOWN AND REMOVE U.S. GOVERNMENT-FURNISHED EQUIPMENT.

3. AS THIS PROCESS WAS GETTING UNDERWAY, AMBASSADOR CONTINUED, INDICATIONS HAD BEEN RECEIVED FROM A VARIETY OF QUARTERS, INCLUDING PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, THAT THAILAND WISHED TO TAKE OVER OPERATION. U.S. CONFIDENTIAL

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DESIRE TO DEFINE THAI WISHES MORE PRECISELY HAD SO

FAR BEEN UNAVAILING, AND WE WERE UNCERTAIN OF
USE TO WHICH THAI EXPECTED TO PUT FACILITY. IF
EQUIPMENT WERE TURNED OVER TO THAILAND EITHER AS
EXCESS OR, IN CASE OF THOSE ITEMS FOR WHICH THERE
WAS U.S. REQUIREMENT, THROUGH FMS SALE, IT WOULD BE
USEABLE ONLY TO SERVICE THAI MILITARY AIRCRAFT, AND
RTG ALREADY HAD EXCESS CAPACITY FOR THIS PURPOSE AT
THAI-AM DON MUANG. AMBASSADOR ASKED MINISTER'S VIEWS.

4. PRAMAN, IN HIS SUBSEQUENT COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS,
CLEARLY DISCLOSED THAT WHAT THAI HAD IN MIND WAS TO
USE FACILITY TO SERVICE COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT. ALTHOUGH
HE WAS REMINDED OF RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF MAP-SUPPLIED
EQUIPMENT AND IT WAS ALSO POINTED OUT TO HIM THAT MUCH
OF EQUIPMENT WAS NOT USEABLE FOR LARGE COMMERCIAL
AIRCRAFT, WHICH REQUIRED SPECIAL TOOLS, HE REAFFIRMED
HIS INTEREST IN PROCEEDING WITH TURN-OVER AND
DESIGNATED RTAF AS RTG'S AGENCY TO DEAL WITH JUSMAG.

5. CHIEF JUSMAG, WHO ALREADY IS IN CONTACT WITH
RTAF ON THIS SUBJECT, WILL CONTINUE DIALOGUE LOOKING
TOWARD TURN-OVER OF MUCH OF THAI-AM UDORN TO RTG/RTAF.
HE BELIEVES IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO NEGOTIATE
APPROPRIATE TURN-OVER ARRANGEMENT WHICH WILL ENABLE
U.S. TO REMOVE THOSE ITEMS DESIRED BY US.
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